

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2119

DIA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DACCA NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA IMMEDIATE

USLO PEKING IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 14839

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJ: INDIAN VIEW OF BANGLADESH SITUATION

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH POLITICAL COUNSELOR AND DCM AT SOVIET NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION NOVEMBER 7, FOREIGN SECRETARY KEWAL SINGH, IN MILDER TONE AND SOFTER VOICE, ECHOED MUCH OF ANALYSIS BY MEA JOINT SECRETARY AJMANI OF BANGLADESH SITUATION AND INDIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD IT REPORTED SEPTTEL BUT CONVEYED SENSE THAT GOI WAS WATCHING AND HOPING THAT THE SITUATION WOULD IMPROVE. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID THAT THE INDIANS WERE UNCERTAIN WHAT WAS HAPPENING AS VIOLENCE SUCCEEDED VIOLENCE AND COUP SUCCEEDED COUP. MAIN INDIAN CONCERN WAS OVER THE REFUGEE PROBLEM (WHICH HE TOO SAID HAD NOT BEGUN TO EMERGE SO FAR AS DESCENT OF SITUATION IN
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BANGLADESH INTO CIVIL WAR AND CHAOS, AND VIOLENCE.

HE NOTED THAT INSTABILITY WOULD WORSEN ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND INVITE FOREIGN INTERVENTION. HE DECLINED TO CHARACTERIZE CURRENT SITUATION AS TAKING ON AN "ANTI-INDIAN" FLAVOR BUT NOTED THAT THEIR MISSION IN DACCA HAD ALL ITS TELEPHONE AND TELETYPE COMMUNICATIONS CUT (HE OBSERVED THAT HICOMM'S REPORTING WAS LARGELY USELESS AND DATED) AND THAT STONES HAD BEEN THROWN THROUGH THE WINDOWS OF INDIAN AIRLINES OFFICE IN DACCA TODAY.

2. PRIME MINISTER GANDHI IS REPORTED BY WIRE SERVICES AS TELLING MEETING OF CONGRESS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TODAY IN HER FIRST PUBLIC COMMENTS ON BANGLADESH THAT "HAPPENINGS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD CAUSE US GRAVE CONCERN. WHILE WE ARE VERY CAREFUL NOT TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ANY COUNTRY, WE CANNOT BUT EXPRESS CONCERN WHEN STABILITY IN OUR REGION IS DISTURBED." AN OFFICIAL GOI STATEMENT RELEASED LATE IN THE AFTERNOON EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE WELFARE AND SECURITY OF INDIANS IN BANGLADESH AND OBSERVED THAT THE "DEVELOPMENTS IN BANGLADESH ARE ITS DOMESTIC AFFAIR, BUT INDIA CANNOT REMAIN INDIFFERENT

AND UNCONCERNED ABOUT THEM. STATEMENT SAID THAT THE GOI EXPECTED BANGLADESH AUTHORITIES WILL DISCHARGE THEIR

OBLIGATIONS TO PROVIDE NECESSARY SECURITY TO ALL INDIANS IN THAT COUNTRY".

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY, HOWEVER, DISCLAIMED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF ANY INDIANS INJURED THUS FAR IN FIGHTING IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS.

3. LAST REPORTS THAT INDIAN MILITARY PERSONNEL TURNED OUT IN LARGE NUMBERS AT THE SOVIET RECEPTION. THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF WAS THE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE SERVICE CHIEFS SEEN ALTHOUGH THE OTHERS COULD HAVE ATTENDED. DURING THE RECEPTION THE DIRECTOR OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE (DMI) WAS SEEN TO TAKE THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF TO A SECLUDED AREA FOR CONFERENCE. CONFIDENTIAL

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THE DMI TOLD SEVERAL OF THE ATTACHES THAT HEAVY FIGHTING WAS GOING ON IN DACCA. THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE TOLD DATT THE SAME THING. THE ENTIRE MILITARY COMMUNITY WAS SPECULATING ON INDIA'S ACTION IN CONNECTION WITH EVENTS IN DACCA. NO CONSENSUS WAS EVIDENT. A JUNIOR MILITARY ATTACHE FROM THE USSR TOLD DATT THEY DID NOT THIN THAT INDIA WILL INTERFERE. ON QUERY BY DATT, THE CHINESE

ATTACHE DECLINED TO COMMENT.
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